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MUNICIPAL FIRE INSURANCE.

The city of Okoboji, Iowa, is about to experiment in a new direction in the matter of municipal ownership of public utilities, or aids to commerce rather, to use the vernacular of the country.

Three of paying amateur rates for fire insurance, the Okobojians have petitioned the Minnesota legislature for permission to establish a plan of municipal insurance which will embrace the insurance by the city of all kinds of property upon which foreign companies take risks against losses by fire. It has been estimated that under municipal insurance double the amount of protection could be carried by an expenditure equal to that now required and over a insurance profit would be left besides to indemnify the city for its trouble in carrying on the business.

Whatever Okoboji's experience with the plan is to be, it does seem in the absence of experience to make to the contrary, that success ought to result from a trial run of the scheme for this is plentiful enough. Reduced to a municipal proposition, fire insurance becomes a more effective protection than when obtained through an agent or operator against insurance. Having assumed the role of fire risk carrier, the municipality will become exceedingly careful and make a point of enforcing every regulation designed to diminish the possibility of a conflagration. Watchfulness will be the word, and every effort will be made to provide the best that can be obtained in the matter of apparatus and devices affording protection against fire. The water supply will be better looked after and efficiency in the fire department will become something of a consideration.

In other words, the theory of municipal fire insurance is apparently sound, and the Okobojians experiment will be watched with interest, because it promises to demonstrate that the business of affording relief to fire victims can be reduced to a non-speculative basis and successfully continued with the business of guarding houses and reducing to a minimum the possibilities of life and property-destroying configurations.

POSSIBILITIES OF THE INJUNCTION PROCESS.

Step by step the injunction process is being pushed to the verge of disrepute in this country.

When during the Chicago riots of several years ago, strikers were enjoined by the courts from injuring property and forcibly interfering with other men engaged in peaceful and lawful vocations, the proceeding was defensible on the score of wisdom; although it was a matter of supererogation to forbid that which was already a criminal offense under the statutes.

Men of foresight pointed out and condemned the use made of the courts on that occasion to arrive at a result for the bringing about of which other machinery was provided in the formation of this government.

Up to the time of the Chicago trouble the courts had been slow and careful in the granting of injunctions. They were not anxious to arrogate to themselves the powers of judge, jury and executioner. With the Chicago precedent before them, however, they plunged headlong into the business of issuing restraining orders during labor strikes, ultimately reaching the point where no pretext is too frivolous to serve them as an excuse for granting injunctions. Judges, or at least many of them, now seem more concerned in outdoing one another in forbidding citizens to exercise their undeniable rights than in the vindication of the law. Flagrant instances of judicial usurpation of power have become so common as to no longer excite wonder. In fact, the people have become so accustomed to being enjoined that they have ceased to notice it much, unless it be to ascertain what new point is strained to admit of the issuing of the latest restraining order.

But, accustomed as the public mind has become to the substitution of private dictum for law, it was hardly prepared for the action of the Chicago judges who recently sent men to jail because one of them pulled the sleeve of a nonunion laborer and said, "Can I speak with you?" in alleged violation of a temporary injunction against "picketing." They were arrested simply for asking the privilege of talking to one of their kind. What they would have talked about was not known and did not matter. They had violated a judge-made law that no man should talk to another or reason with him, and that was enough. Some corporation had appeared in court and persuaded the judge that it was dangerous for one man to walk alongside another and argue with him, and the right of speech had forthwith been abridged.

If courts can make an offense of that, which the statutes themselves make no offense, just so it is the act of a wage-earner on strike, what is to prevent them from going to greater lengths and on occasion exerting their power to indiscriminately restrain men in every walk of life from talking on any subject whatsoever or seeking in any manner to restrain and defend their right to enjoy a share of the advantages which Americans are supposed to inherit?

It would require no greater effort on the part of a

judge to enjoin men from trying to convert voters from one political faith to another than to enjoin them from trying to make converts for unionism. Union pickets are no greater criminals than political pickets, and there is no reason why a political party as well as a corporation should not be able to persuade a court that it is dangerous for men to walk together, especially about election time. And the newspapers, they are dangerous, too, and might be restrained from referring in any way to anything or anybody the courts care to forbid them paying attention to.

Indeed, the possibilities of the injunction process are as limitless as the whims of the courts which have acquired the habit of cheerfully sanctioning a frequent resort thereto, and there is good cause to fear that the ease with which it has become a factor in the settlement of labor troubles may inspire its invocation in other directions.

THE NATION MOURNS.

In the streets of a city of which he was a guest, and wherein there is displayed the marvelous evidences of the splendid growth and progress of the republic of which he was the chief executive, the president of the United States thus in the very frenzy of madness, been shot down by an assassin.

In the presence of a calamity so supreme and overwhelming, words fail to give expression to the mingled sentiments of rage, sorrow and sympathy which such an act calls forth. Rage that a misguided wretch, possibly not even a citizen of this country, should dare lay murderous hands upon its honored chief executive; sorrow that a life set apart and consecrated to the promotion of the National glory and honor should be cut short by cruel assassination, and sympathy for those bound to him by the ties of kinship—and for nearly a third of a century, has shared his trials and rejoiced in his triumphs and borne herself so worthy in her exalted station.

In such an hour sectional lines and partisan differences are forgotten, and the people of all sections are drawn together by the love of a common and profound sorrow. However much we may differ from President McKinley as to political principles, and the policies wherewith these principles have been illustrated, no man can question his patriotism nor the integrity of his purposes.

He manifested his courage and devotion to duty by his service as a soldier in the days of his young manhood, and in the relations of son, husband, neighbor and citizen he set an example of lofty living and illustrated the highest ideals of American citizenship.

In his death (which seems probable at this writing) the Nation sustains a loss that is well nigh irreparable. We are not surprised that Lewis of The Post should be upset on the price of potatoes, but that he should be upset on the price of potatoes strikes us as a little strange. How do they sell potatoes, anyhow, by count, by weight, or by measure? But he doesn't know—San Diego Sun.

EXCHANGE INTERVIEWS.

Fearing that the congressional recompence will eliminate Tom Ball, The Houston Post is frightened, and after having a collision of distributed editorial immundices at the legislature, exclaims: "It is not therefore Congressman Ball, the individual, but Congressman Ball, the omniscient that the people of Texas are interested in, because the ports of Galveston, Galveston, Port Arthur, Victoria, Beaumont, and the Trinity, Colorado and Neches rivers must depend mainly upon his skill, energy and influence with the house committee if they are to see their hoped realized in the near future." The Journal can speak only for Beaumont, Galveston, Port Arthur and Galveston, and in behalf of those cities, their only outlet is the above allegation of the Post.

Neither of these ports is to be blamed for the same.

Both for mineral assistance in the development of those deep water projects, and it would create an severance in this section if he should happen to be implicated back to the peaceful walks of private citizenship. The Journal will say also that The Post is hypocritical rather than honest in its appeal to Congressman Ball's political bacon. Until the State democratic convention at Waco last year, The Post was doing its utmost to create a lobby that would eventually boost Congressman Ball and the governorship, and thereby slight the country by depriving it of his services in the lower house of the National legislature.—Beaumont Journal.

If the member of congress who directly represents Hemming, Orange, Port Arthur and Sabine, and who knows the situation and is acquainted with the mode of procedure in congress—will endorse the above. The Post will have nothing further to say. But it is likely that he will do so, and it is very much to be doubted that the Journal speaks by authority for the places named. A much more probable explanation of the foregoing is that the Journal is mad with somebody about something and "don't care who knows it." So far as the statement to the effect that The Post attempted to boost Congressman Ball's political bacon is concerned, there is not the slightest foundation whatever. The Post knew long before the Waco convention that he would not under any circumstances be a candidate for that position. He said and wrote as much to many of his friends throughout the State.

* * *

A New York jester tried to collect a bill for 30 cents from a woman by striking her in the face with the ice tongs. Marshall Messenger.

Probably did it in cold blood, too. How would you like to see the woman?

* * *

The Houston Post produced an editorial not long since on the subject of burning negroes, opposing the practice. The article has called forth some hot replies from different parts of the State, all so far as we have noticed, favoring burning the shade of negro guilty of certain heinous crimes. The trouble with preachers like The Post is that they seldom practice what they preach when one of these cases comes home to them. Bryan Eagle.

The Post is thankful to say that "one of these cases" never has come home to it. If it had, it is entirely possible that in a frenzy it might wish to burn the miscreant at the stake, but it will never be able to accomplish such a breach of the law unless it is assisted by a mob of irresponsibles to whom "one of these cases" never has come home.

* * *

The price of potions is nearly on a par with that of potations.—Houston Post.

We are not surprised that Lewis of The Post should be upset on the price of potatoes, but that he should be upset on the price of potatoes strikes us as a little strange. How do they sell potatoes, anyhow, by count, by weight, or by measure? But he doesn't know—San Diego Sun.

By the square root, son.

* * *

Our tin bucket brigade needs increasing, and nothing will do it so effectively as a factory or two.—Yonkers Herald.

First time we ever saw adsons referred to as factories.

* * *

Ada Gray, a New York actress with no matrimonial ambitions to exploit, has burst into the glare of publicity by saying she is dead—Greenville Banner.

Perhaps she, like Corbett, is a "dead one" and doesn't know it.

* * *

Another death at the hands of the St. Louis Street Car company and threats of lynching motorman.—San Antonio Light.

At the hands? You seem to forget that they have wheels.

* * *

Come into the garden, Maude.

And sit on the garden rail.

For winter's got a move on himself.

And there are onion beds to make.

—Victoria Advocate.

* * *

And you will eat the onions, Maude,

Grown in the soil you till.

And later in the season, Maude.

We'll have your breath to kill.

* * *

Father, mother, is your child in school? If not, why not?

—Yonkers Times.

Too young?

* * *

When you make vanilla ice cream add a dash of black pepper. You will be as much surprised as I was at the odd improvement in the flavor.—Vernon Sun.

Ice cream so treated must certainly be hot stuff.

* * *

The Journeys of South America have got the ball by the mouth (Poco del Tore). They may find that they have got the animal by the bushes and when they catch the Côte del Tore.—Laredo Times.

My! if we could only go French like that! Let's have a cosa de coto.

* * *

The curly girls are wearing hanging down on one side the "Janice," after Janice Meredith. We regret that Steven never evolved a bald-headed hero, so that the baldness would be called "the 'Chancy' or 'Reginald'" and become the rage.—Atherton Globe.

* * *

Drew has called all the reporters around him and gravely informed them in a two hours' talk that he positively will not be interviewed.

* * *

Possession is nine points of law, and the train robbers have got it.

* * *

We say that American girls are too particular. All this after seeing men some of our brides are marry. We talk like a Chinaman.

* * *

Perhaps France intends asking the czar to help her split the wits.

* * *

Captain Forsyth pleads guilty to telling the truth, but he would probably have told something else had he known it was for publication.

* * *

Patrick Cudahy was not compelled to "skin the cat" in the royal presence.

* * *

Now that Bourke Cockran has been snubbed in England, can we not snub Lord Pauncefote and so preserve the balance of trade?

* * *

Chicago's free baths are closed. But is she clean enough to last all winter?

* * *

The Central American States have begun to issue proclamations. This is proof positive that hostilities have really commenced.

* * *

According to that fish story, Grover doesn't swallow all the bait he takes along.

* * *

Mrs. Sampson has given notice that her husband will appear before the court of inquiry. It is very kind of her to permit him.

* * *

Lamborn's course seems to prove that a yacht builder and his money are soon parted.

* * *

Mr. Hanna will soap an old man that no presidential boom is genuine that has not got his trade mark blown in the barrel.

* * *

The New York butchers are still forbidden to have anything to do with Sunday joints.

* * *

The 20-year-old son of a New York clergyman is to marry a widow of 45. The ideal! She's old enough to be his father.

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The bread trust doesn't care who makes the bread if they are permitted to make the dough.

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The man who goes against the boarding house game this winter will have to pay extra for his stock of Saratoga.

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The Turks have carried off an American lady. It is to be hoped that she will come to no harm.

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It is to be hoped that the song writers' trust will devise some scheme to prevent their wares being murdered.

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